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21 August 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CONTENTS

25X1

3. Colombian foreign minister believes Castro may be having "deep domestic difficulties" and may therefore be amenable to influence by other Latin American governments. (Page *iii*)

25X1

Next 4 Page(s) In Document Exempt

25X1



25X1

Cuba-Colombia: Colombian Foreign Minister Turbay, who unexpectedly visited Havana after the airliner in which he was riding was hijacked over Mexico on 9 August, concluded from a long conversation with Fidel Castro that the Cuban leader may be having "deep domestic troubles" and wants to find a way out. Turbay implied that he now sees some hope that Cuba will be amenable to the influence of other Latin American governments. He feels that Castro is anxious to avoid giving the US any pretext for intervention, possibly because he is uncertain how much Soviet aid he would receive in such eventuality. Turbay had been touring various Latin American countries seeking support for a US-supported Colombian plan to convolve an OAS meeting that would define the conditions under which Cuba would continue or cease being a member of the inter-American system. No

25X1

25X1

(Backup, Page 4)

21 Aug 61

DAILY BRIEF

iii

25X1

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

25X1

Cuba-Colombia

[Castro told Turbay that US actions had forced his regime "into the arms of the Soviets" and repeated Cuba's familiar line that the regime is "socialist," not Communist, and is prepared to resume relations with the US immediately if this can be done on the basis of "mutual respect." Turbay said Castro seemed unprepared to discuss possible OAS action on the Cuban problem. The prime minister presented no proposals or counterproposals to Turbay's detailed and emphatic presentation of the view that Cuba must decide whether to place itself within or outside the inter-American system and that its present ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc are incompatible with this system.]

25X1

[Turbay noted that Castro listened intently to his presentation, said he would give careful thought to it, and alleged that no one had spoken to him of these considerations before. This last statement is patently false--the former Brazilian and Argentine ambassadors in Havana had often sought to press these points in long personal conversations with him considerably before the rupture of US-Cuban relations last January. Castro's conversation with Turbay was consistent with recent Cuban efforts, clearly evident during the conference at Punta del Este, Uruguay, to convince other Latin Americans of Cuba's "reasonableness" and "conciliatory" stand with respect to the US.]

[The recent letup in Cuba's provocative and overt aggressive actions in the hemisphere may well be due to pressure by the Soviet Union, which probably estimates that it would have more to gain from the Castro regime's acceptance in the hemisphere on the basis of "peaceful coexistence" than if Castro's continued provocations led to US or concerted inter-American action that would force the USSR's hand on its promises of military support.]

25X1

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